



# Light THE WAY

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Impeccable service, quality craftsmanship and superior design—for over 40 years Reynolds Landscaping has created beautiful and functional outdoor living environments by listening to client needs while continually seeking to improve and expand their services to meet these needs. In 2004, Tanek Hood joined the Reynolds business and, with his marriage to daughter Katie Reynolds, the Reynolds family—quickly finding his niche in the company by directing the Reynolds Lighting Division.

Over the subsequent two decades, Tanek Hood has developed the Lighting Division of Reynolds Landscaping into the premier provider of low-voltage lighting on the Island through innovative design, attention to detail and a keen ability to listen and respond to the wants and needs of his clients. Throughout the years he has trained with some of the leading lighting design professionals and equipment manufacturers in the country—from Florida to Texas and California to Colorado—and has emerged as a highly-sought-after and seasoned professional in this competitive field.

Hood explains that outdoor lighting is an essential component of the Jersey shore lifestyle and, from his perspective, outdoor lighting has become a basic amenity and central feature—extending the outdoor experience well into the evening hours. He strives to achieve the best shore experience possible for the homeowner by continuously adapting to the changing needs of the client and their family. He outlines the benefits of low-voltage lighting along with his advice and recommendations below.

During the initial meeting with a potential client what information are you attempting to gain? What factors drive your design?

My initial consultation is always driven by the two words, “why light?”. I consider lighting to be a key feature for improving my clients time at the shore with their family. Regardless of the answer a client might give to this question, my primary goal is always focused on improving their limited time on LBI. I also attempt to design a lighting system that is adaptable—meeting not only on the immediate needs of the homeowner but having the ability to change over time as the family evolves.

So then, a lighting system should not be a static installation but should have the flexibility to adapt on a regular basis as family needs evolve and environmental features mature?





Yes, and I would say that this feature is the biggest omission from most lighting systems—the ability to change over time. As plant material grows in the landscape environment, it is essential that lighting fixtures have the ability to be raised and lamp intensity increased to accommodate the growth habits of plants in the garden.

The lighting system also needs to have the ability to evolve over time as the family grows and lifestyles change. This requires a lighting designer to ask some pointed questions about how lighting is going to be used. Often the client purchasing the lighting system will not be its primarily user—the homeowner may be developing the outdoor space for their young adult children or grandchildren. Whether parents of young children or teenagers or seniors with physical or visual constraints, the lighting controls and intensity must be able to change easily with changing needs and lifestyles.

Everyone ages so it is essential that the lighting design be flexible enough to provide functional and aesthetic lighting for the duration of its existence. For the past decade, our lighting systems at Reynolds Landscaping

have been designed with this feature clearly built-in as a foundation of all lighting designs.

What are some common mistakes that homeowners make when installing a new landscape lighting system?

A big mistake that some homeowners make is electing to install a larger system than is necessary while, at the same time, using inferior products. I always advise my clients to move forward with their outdoor lighting in phases. This allows the homeowner to live with and assess the initial lighting installation—making sure that it functions correctly and withstands the site conditions—before adding to it. My mantra is “less is more”—you can always add to the system, however, removing components is a bit harder.

What criteria and credentials should a homeowner look for when selecting a lighting designer for their project?

When selecting a lighting designer for your project look for a professional that has trained and traveled outside their primary jurisdiction of the lighting world and has

certifications offered by any of the major lighting associations. These include the Association of Outdoor Lighting Professionals (AOLP), the Illuminating Engineering Society (IES), Dark Skies Association and the International Association of Lighting Designers (IALD).

Having these associations and experiences will suggest that the lighting designer is serious about their trade and educational expansion. They suggest that the lighting professional that you have selected has a basic understanding of the techniques, codes and requirements standard in the industry.

How has the field of low voltage landscape lighting evolved and advanced at Reynolds Landscaping—and in general—since you first became a lighting designer?

The biggest advancement in the field of landscape lighting, and specifically at Reynolds Lighting Division, has been the introduction of LED (Light Emitting Diode) components. Besides being extremely reliable and low-maintenance from an operational standpoint, LEDs have allowed lighting designs to present consistently on a nightly basis with little need for adjustment. Also a big advancement in the field has been continual technological improvements and upgrades in the quality and performance of materials and fixtures.

Another significant improvement in the field over the last 5 years has been the willingness of professionals to share information and ideas online and through social media. While there are some tips and tricks-of-the-trade that I prefer to keep to myself, gone are the days when all information is hoarded—there is now a growing mindset confident in the belief that by sharing we all benefit.

Zoning and staging of lighting, driven by utility and functionality, has also advanced in recent years- ‘task lighting’ that is clearly conceived to fit a task at hand, such as late-night grilling or directional bulkhead lighting for crabbing off the dock in the evening.

What new cutting-edge technologies and methodologies do you expect will trend in the lighting field in the coming years?

The biggest development that I expect to see coming into vogue in outdoor lighting is color. Personally, however, I am not a big proponent of color-changing systems in the residential backyard. The quality of the aesthetic created through colored lighting is difficult to maintain and can adversely affect tightly situated neighboring properties. There is plenty of bad lighting on LBI—instead of color enhancements, I would like to see more downlighting, less bluish color temperatures and less solar outdoor lighting.

Finally, is it more efficient to design an outdoor lighting system during the conceptual stages of a new home construction or to wait until a new home is completed before tackling outdoor lighting?

Every one of my lighting designs developed during the initial architectural planning stage of a new home installation has resulted in a better lit home and outdoor living space. It is my goal to think about every aspect of the family, the property and the home as it relates to lighting—it’s how we start and end our day. Typically, if I am involved in the preliminary stage of the project, I will reduce sconces on the house, add layers of downlighting to the property and residence and make sure color and temperature of all LED’s are warm and uniform.

*For more information on the lighting services and fixtures available through Reynolds Landscaping, please contact Tanek Hood on his cell phone at 609-468-8488 or via e-mail at [tanek@reynoldslbi.com](mailto:tanek@reynoldslbi.com).*

